CONSIDERING THE RESURRECTION

The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (the apostle Paul)

One of the great testimonies to the fact that Jesus Christ really did rise from the dead is the conversion of the apostle Paul. Formerly known as Saul of Tarsus, the apostle Paul was 'Public Enemy No.1' for the early church. He hated Christians for what they believed and made every effort to stamp out Christianity. The Bible records how *"Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord…"* **(Acts 9:1)** hunted down believers and persecuted them. Then, on the road to Damascus, he had a personal encounter with the risen Lord Jesus Christ and was converted! You can read the account of this in full in Acts 9, in the Bible.
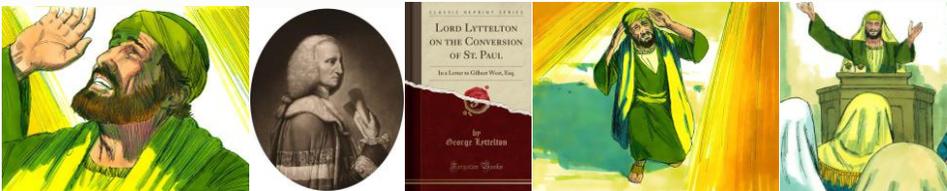
In the 1700's, George Lyttelton set out to prove that Christianity was false, and chose to undermine the conversion of Paul as his means of doing so. Because Paul wrote much of the New Testament, if it could be shown he was never really converted, it would be a death blow to Christianity. However, as he investigated the facts he quickly became convinced of the matter and was also converted! He wrote a book to show it's true!

Popular Objections

"What about all the hypocrites in the church?"

The word 'hypocrite' literally means 'two-faced' and comes from the world of theatre. In the past when an actor was playing two roles in the same play, they would have a mask on a stick with two faces, one on each side. As they played the different parts they would turn the stick and put on a different face. Hence the saying 'two-faced.' So when a person objects that there are hypocrites in the church, what they are saying is that Christians are two-faced. This normally implies that believers profess to be something good (ie, 'holier-than-thou') when in fact they are nothing of the sort – according to the accusation.

What lies at the heart of this objection, though, is a profound misunderstanding of *true* Christians and *Biblical* Christianity. Whilst there may be some people which misrepresent the Bible, true Christianity is actually humble, and honest rather than hypocritical. You see, the Bible says that we are all sinners (Romans 3:23) and for a person to become a true Christian they have to admit that fact. They have to see that they are hell-deserving wretches who have no hope of heaven apart from the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. So, far from saying they're better than others, they are actually facing up to the ugly truth about themselves. They need a Saviour and know it. *Do you?* According to Christ, the real hypocrites are those who say 'I'm good enough already' (Luke 18:9-14).